

Practicing Sabbath & Play

Life in the Kingdom of Abundance operates differently than life in the Empire of Scarcity. When we know the reality of God's goodness and abundance, freedom, rest and joy are available and even expected. Yet it takes intentionality to practice this counter-cultural reality in the midst of the empire of scarcity that surrounds us, telling us there's never enough and always demanding more. When we take time to practice sabbath and play, we are training ourselves to live as if the Kingdom of Abundance is reality. We learn to trust God and depend on what God promises, rather than what the voices of the empire demand.

If you find it difficult to rest and/or play, don't quit! Continue the practice even if it's hard. Use it as an opportunity to recognize places that Jesus wants to free you from the empire mentality, and help you live in the abundance of the Kingdom.

Sabbath¹

Sabbath is a twenty-four hour practice of *shalom*: peaceful, restful well-being that is given as a gift to God's people. It is not a reward for finishing all our work; rather, it is an interruption of our work so we can receive what we need from our God, who is always working for our good. Plan ahead to take one day off from everything you possibly can that feels like work: errands, cooking, cleaning, driving, to-do lists, obligations, or appointments. Use the time to see how much "nothing" you can do. You have permission to be lazy. You don't have to produce or achieve anything – unless it brings you deep joy. Take a nap – or several! Spend time doing things that restore your soul and give you life. Receive rest as a gift from this God who restores your soul.

Play²

We often think of spiritual practices as very serious affairs. But play and the art of having fun are supremely important spiritual habits. Nothing defies the enemy's efforts at despair more than a good, long laugh! For some, play looks like being out fishing on the water all day. For others, it looks like watching a favorite light-hearted comedy, taking an evening walk, or playing a favorite board game with friends. If this is not a normal part of your life, make a plan to play at least two times in a week. If you already have play built in to your week, be mindful of the ways you are doing *seriously* good, spiritual work for your soul.

¹ From *Living the Way of Jesus: Practicing the Christian Calendar One Week at a Time*, by M. LaVigne, Foundry Publishing 2019, p. 56.

² From *3 Ways to Cultivate Joy When so Much is Wrong*, by M. LaVigne, www.thefoundrycommunity.com, accessed October 30, 2022.